



Living With The Lost And Found: The Representation Of Stray Vs. Pet Dogs In Contemporary Global Short Fiction (Abstract Only)

By: Jeanne Dubino, PhD

Abstract

The French poet Charles Baudelaire praises homeless dogs over homebound dogs--pets. "Good" dogs are "those whom everyone drives away"; they are intelligent, "marvelously sharpened by necessity." Kept dogs are fops, narcissistic, and foolish. Whereas pets are accorded person status, strays are marginalized. Examining the representation of homebound and homeless dogs reveals what it means to live with dogs along the inside-home and outside-homeless spectrum within the course of their own lives, especially when they are taken into their "forever home" or are ousted from it. In global literary texts, one can see how these relationships cross cultures. The position of dogs is an ever fluid one, and the movement from one to another is filled, in fiction, with poignancy, as is evident in short stories by the US-American Alice Adams and the British-Zimbabwean Doris Lessing. This paper examines authorial methods used to create this pathos and also themes of lost and found, or found and lost, which make human-canine relationships even more fraught. These themes appear in stories by the Japanese Taeka Tomioko and the Indian Anita Desai, who dramatize interspecies tension and the impact of lost and found canines on human relationships. This paper enables the audience to consider the relationships between homebound and homeless dogs as they fall along the scales of narrative attention, and dimensions such as freedom and insignificance vs. security and status, and how these are socially determined; and the intensification of canine and human affect resulting from the movement of lost and found.

Dubino, J. (2020). Living with the Lost and Found: The Representation of Stray vs. Pet Dogs in Contemporary Global Short Fiction (Abstract Only). RECAP 2020, The Office of Research. Appalachian State University, Boone, NC.